

AUTISM CONNECT 2026

April 7th

Thank You!



TO ALL OF OUR PLATINUM SPONSORS!

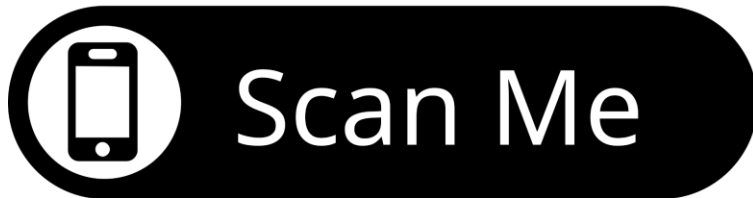


Preparing for Adulthood: **What to Know about Life After High School**

AutismConnect Conference 2026

Jodie Jones, Advocate





PowerPoint

<https://qrco.de/bgdeuT>



Our Mission

To protect the legal, civil, and human rights of people with disabilities in South Carolina.

- Enable individuals to advocate for themselves.
- Advocate on the individual's behalf when they've been discriminated against or denied a service to which they are entitled.
- Educate the public, stakeholders, and policymakers about laws that protect individuals with disabilities.
- Promote policies and services that advance those rights and interests.



About DRSC

- Non-profit providing services statewide.
- Independent of agencies that provide treatment or other services to people with disabilities.
- DRSC is the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for South Carolina.
- As the P&A for SC, DRSC is mandated by state and federal law to protect the rights of people with disabilities in SC.
- There are 57 P&As nationwide in all states, districts, and territories.



What We Will Cover

- Alternatives to Guardianship
- Post-Secondary Education
- Employment
- Agencies that Can Help





<https://qrco.de/LifeAfterSchool>



Guardianship



Guardianship and Alternatives

- When a child with a disability becomes 18, they can then legally make their own decisions. Sometimes potential guardianship may come up.
- However, there are less restrictive alternatives.
 - Supported Decision Making
 - Adult Students with Disabilities Educational Rights Consent Act
 - More information:
<https://www.disabilityrightssc.org/rethinking-guardianship/>



Post-Secondary Education



True or False:

If I have accommodations in high school, they will automatically transfer to college.



Life After High School Is Different!

- Students who move on to college or technical school will not receive accommodations the way they were determined in public school.



High School versus Postsecondary Education

- High School

- School district has a responsibility to identify students with disabilities
- School district must evaluate the student
- Parents are usually the decision makers

- Postsecondary

- Students must self-identify if accommodations are needed
- May need to provide documentation of disability
- Students are the decision makers



Contact Disability Support Services (may go by different names)

- Student has the burden to:
 - Request accommodations and/or modifications;
 - Provide reasonable documentation of disability if needed; and
 - Provide documentation of the need for the accommodation/modification if needed



Request Tips

- Reasonable accommodations can be requested any time
 - The earlier, the better
 - Follow the school's procedures
 - Let the school know ASAP if the accommodation is not working



True or False:

**Post-secondary schools are
required to provide the
accommodations I request.**



Keep in Mind

- Postsecondary schools are not required to:
 - Fundamentally alter the nature of the program or
 - Create an undue burden
- In these instances, the school must try to find an alternate accommodation



Employment



Workplace Barriers

- When individuals with disabilities reach employment, they sometimes encounter a workplace barrier due to their disability in the application process, performing their job, or accessing a privilege or benefit of a job just like other employees. In this case
 - The applicant or employee can request a “reasonable accommodation” from the employer.
 - Accommodations are not automatically provided by the employer.



True or False:

Accommodations can be used for workplace parties or other events.



Reasonable Accommodations

- An adjustment or modification that enables the applicant/employee with a disability to:
 - Apply for a job
 - Perform the essential functions of their job
 - Enjoy the benefits/privileges of their job like their co-workers (ex: training/social events)
 - Can include making facilities accessible



Not Reasonable Accommodations

- Eliminating an essential job function
- Lower production/performance standards
- Personal use items used on and off the job (ex: hearing aids, wheelchair)
- Requests that are an “undue hardship”



When can accommodations be requested?

- 1) when an interview is scheduled**
- 2) once the job offer is made**
- 3) when a need arises**
- 4) all of the above**



Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation

- Can be requested at any time
- May come from the applicant, employee, or another person
- There is no exact language. The employer needs to be told that an adjustment/change is needed because of their disability.
- Does not need to be in writing, but we suggest that it is.
See Job Accommodation Network sample:
<https://askjan.org/media/accommrequestltr.cfm>



Once the Request is Made

- The employer should engage in an “interactive process”
- Informal process to clarify needs and identify a reasonable accommodation
- Employer may request more information about the disability if not obvious. This is limited to documentation that establishes the disability and the need for the accommodation.



Where to Find Help



Vocational Rehabilitation

- SC Vocational Rehabilitation
Department: <https://www.scvrd.net/>
- SC Commission for the Blind:
<https://www.sccb.sc.gov/>



VR: Transition and Post-Secondary Education

- VR can provide assistance in transition planning while students are still in high school
 - Can provide real-world work experiences/shadowing
 - Can be involved with IEP teams in transition planning
- VR can assist with post-secondary education in several different ways
 - Can provide financial assistance for certification or degree programs (this includes advanced degrees)
 - Can provide assistive technology to enable student to access the campus, curriculum, or other



VR and Employment

- VR can assist with employment in many ways.
 - Help finding a job (includes vocational assessments)
 - Help with assistive technology and requesting reasonable accommodations
 - Help with initial purchase of work related uniform items



Centers for Independent Living

- Able SC: <https://www.able-sc.org/>
- AccessAbility:
<https://www.abilitysc.org/>
- Walton Options:
<https://waltonoptions.org/>



Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Formerly known as Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN)
- For those who qualify, OIDD may provide services during youth and early adulthood.
- We recommend applying early.



OIDD and Medicaid Waivers

- There are different Medicaid waivers that can provide assistance to individuals with disabilities if they qualify.
- DRSC Guide to Medicaid and Medicaid Waivers:
<https://www.disabilityrightssc.org/resource/medicaid-guide/>
- Keep in mind, some waivers often have very long wait lists



Disability Rights South Carolina

Help Line: 1-866-275-7273

TTY: 1-866-232-4525

info@disabilityrightssc.org

WWW.disabilityrightssc.org





**Give us
your
feedback**



Thank you!

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Session Survey



Ballroom C 1:30-2:30